Theresa Williams September 21, 2010

Questions for image analysis

1. What was your first impression?

I smiled and giggled; it made me feel happier and lighter.

1. Describe the image in detail

This image is of a mentally disabled patient and his psychiatrist.

They are standing right next to each other, leaning against each other, wearing different kinds of funny glasses. One has a fake big nose and bushy mustache and eyebrows. This man was shorter and heavier, with clothing more rumpled than the other man, who had fake glasses with fake eyeballs on springs hanging out from the fake glasses. This other man was taller with a well-trimmed white beard and well dressed in casual clothing.

They both had goofy smiles.

1. What is the immediate context of this image (inside the frame)?

Two men about the same age, one mentally disabled the other a doctor, both wearing funny glasses and acting silly. They are both happy and seem to have a good relationship.

1. What is the original context of the image (beyond the frame)? Where can this be found? What is the historical, social, or political context?

This was in an Easter Seals brochure, their annual report. They were promoting the services they provide and they’re supporters and staff. There were pictures of disabled people often with staff. It is trying to show people the benefits of this non-profitable organization and the caring staff they employ to provide services to people with disabilities.

1. Who is the author/ creator? What do you know about them? What is important about who they are and how does what they do affect the image?

The creator is Easter Seals Disability Services. A non profitable organization that provides services for people with disabilities or special needs and their families so that they have equal opportunities to live, learn, work, and play in their communities. Easter Seals provides help to the disabled community. They provide benefits to meet the extra needs for the disabled, different from the rest of the population. Interpretation of the image gives a mixed message. On one level, it shows the organization as validating the disabled as equal to others. However, it also reminds us that the disabled are lesser individuals who need our help to be more like us.

1. Identify the creator’s purpose?

The purpose of this image is to promote the organization and the staff, and to demonstrate the humanity of the services available. This picture shows that everyone can be fun, silly, and express themselves as human equals. The disabled cannot be distinguished from a doctor when they are seen in a light that minimizes their differences.

1. Who are the intended audience? What knowledge or experience do viewers bring to the image?

The audience is the supports/ donators of Easter Seals as well as the patients and members of the disabled community and their families. They bring the knowledge of some of the services of the organization. This also values the work of the people who directly interact with disabled people. At some level, the brochure is self-congratulatory, and self-promoting.

1. Using a theory of Linton, Garland-Thomson, hook, Sontag, scarry or Millett-Gallant, write and arguable, evaluative judgment that shows how the image works or what is important about it.

This image is reflective of Garland-Thomson’s and Linton’s theory in that it invites people to stare at the person and challenges the public to see the similarities between a person with disabilities and a person who is not disabled, and to make them understand that they aren’t that different. In the same way instead of seeing the disabled person as a lesser individual, meaning can be reassigned; instead of a doctor and patient, two equal individuals.

1. What from the answers above supports this interpretation?

The fact that they are difficult to distinguish between doctor and disabled person shows people that they’re similar. They are both wearing funny glasses, which knowingly prompts the public to look at them. It meets the brochures needs by representing that the staff and community want to help disabled people be less stigmatized.